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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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TAGS: SOPN, PINT, KS, US
SUBJ: KOREAN PRESS REPORTS FONMIN'S REMARKS ON PAK TONG-SON
REF: SEOUL 7729 (DTG 120915Z SEP 77)
SUMMARY: ROK FOREIGN MINISTER REPORTEDLY INVITES US INVESTIGATORS TO INTERVIEW PAK TONG SON IN SEOUL
1. KOREAN AFTERNOON VERNACULAR PAPERS SEPTEMBER 13 CARRIED FRONT-PAGE STORIES ON PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY FONMIN PAK TONG-JIN IN WHICH HE SAID ROKG WOULD COOPERATE WITH USG TO SOLVE PAK AFFAIR IN ALL WAYS EXCEPT FORCIBLY SENDING PAK TONG-SON TO THE US. COOPERATION WOULD INCLUDE SENDING RESULTS OF ROKG AGENCIES' INVESTIGATIONS TO US AND PERMITTING US INVESTIGATORS TO COME TO KOREA, STORIES SAY, QUOTING PAK AS SAYING HE WOULD TRY TO REACH A SOLUTION THIS WAY IN UP-COMING MEETING WITH SECSTATE VANCE.
2. TONGA ILBO ARTICLE, ONE OF THE MOST DETAILED, GOES ON
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TO REVEAL THAT RESULTS OF PROSECUTOR'S INVESTIGATIONS OF PAK TONG-SON HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO US IN SECRET THROUGH US EMBASSY AND THAT, IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER ASKING FOR COOPERATION, ROKG HAS INFORMED HIGH LEVELS OF USG OF BASIC ROKG POLICY TO COOPERATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, EXCEPTING FORCIBLE RETURN OF PAK. PAK IS QUOTED AS STATING ROKG DOES NOT WANT UNNECESSARY "FRICTION AND STATIC" IN ROK-US RELATIONS OVER THIS CASE, WHILE NOTING THAT US SIDE HAS NOT YET REQUESTED ANY FORM OF COOPERATION OTHER THAN RETURN OF PAK. ARTICLE SAYS FONMIN SUGGESTED AMB SNEIDER PERSONALLY MEET PAK TONG-SON AND URGE HIM TO RETURN TO US, BUT US SIDE DID NOT RESPOND. FONMIN PAK SAID DETAILS OF ANY US INVESTIGATIONS IN KOREA WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT BY LEGAL EXPERTS; TONGA SPECULATED THAT COOPERATION WOULD EXTEND ONLY TO PROCURING OF TESTIMONY AND ROK PRESECUTORS WOULD SIT IN ON ANY SUCH SESSIONS.
3. COMMENTS BY FONMIN UPSTAGED EARLIER, HARD-LINE COMMENTS BY "A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL" WHICH MORNING PRESS HAD FEATURED. THAT OFFICIAL, EMPHASIZING SEPARATENESS OF PAK AFFAIR FROM ISSUE OF
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COMPENSATORY MEASURES FOR TROOP WITHDRAWAL, HAD SAID SOLUTION OF PROBLEM WAS DIFFICULT DIPLOMATICALLY BECAUSE OF POLITICAL FACTORS INVOLVED AND CALLED FOR US TO ALLOW A COOLING-OFF PERIOD AND THEN PRODUCE SUGGESTION OTHER THAN RETURN OF PAK. TONGA'S VERSION OF THESE REMARKS, APPENDED TO END OF ARTICLE ON FONMIN'S COMMENTS, QUOTES A "DIPLOMATIC SOURCE" AS RE-HASHING LOCKHEED AND KIM SANG-GUN CASES AND CONCLUDING THAT IT IS "UNREASONABLE" AND "AN EMOTIONAL ACT" FOR US, WITH SUCH PRECEDENTS, TO ASK FOR PAK'S RETURN.

4. MINOR SINA ILBO TODAY RAN EDITORIAL ON PAK AFFAIR SAYING IT WOULD BE A GOOD THING IF US INVESTIGATORS CAME TO KOREA.

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5. NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT IN SEOUL IS PURSUING STORY HERE TO ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE IF USG INTERPRETS FONMIN'S REMARKS AS INVITATION TO US INVESTIGATORS TO COME TO KOREA.

6. PRESS ALSO REPORTED SEPTEMBER 13 NDP SPOKESMAN STATEMENT CALLING FOR SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO LOOK INTO PAK TONG-SON CASE. CALL WAS BASED ON DECISION OF NDP SUPREME COUNCIL WHICH MET ON SEPT 12.

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